

Tourism Facilities for the Mallaig, Morar and Arisaig Area Survey Results

Our survey was promoted online through Facebook, was advertised in the local newspaper, Westword, and paper copies were available within Mallaig and Morar Community Centre, in a local café and on campsites. The survey was introduced using the following text:

In support of the funding applications we are making for new / improved toilet / shower / campervan facilities in Mallaig, Morar and at Traigh, we have put together a short (9 question!) survey. We'd like your views whether you live locally or are a visitor to the area, and we need to collect them before 15th July.

To complete the survey, please click the link below, and please feel free to share far and wide! Thanks <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/5CYZCHT>

The survey asked the following questions:

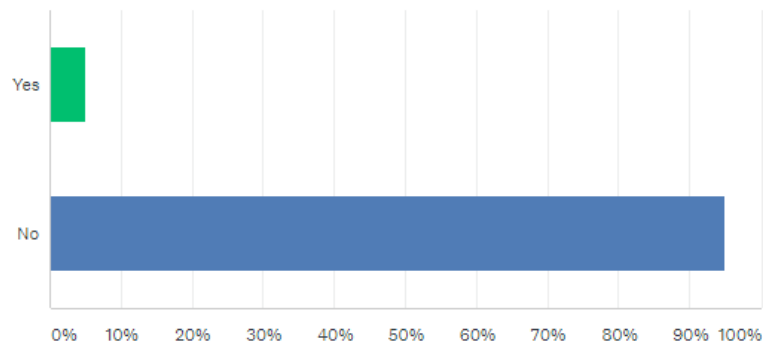
1. Do you feel that there is adequate provision of toilet / shower / campervan waste points in the area between Arisaig and Mallaig? *(Yes/No)*
2. If no, where do you think the issues are? *(open text)*
3. Have you experienced issues caused by a lack of toilet facilities / chemical waste emptying points? (E.g. coming across human waste while out walking) If you have, please describe these: *(open text)*
4. Do you change your daily routines / habits in order to avoid peak tourist times, and if so, what changes do you make? (e.g do you walk your dog a different route / avoid Mallaig while the Steam Train is in etc.) *(open text)*
5. What other improvements could be made locally to either enhance the visitor experience or make life easier for locals to go about their daily business?
6. Do you feel it is reasonable to charge people to use?: *(yes/no)*
Public Toilets
Showers
Chemical Waste Disposal
7. Do you have any thoughts on what a reasonable charge might be?: *(open text)*
Toilets
Showers
Chemical Waste Disposal
8. Do you have any other comments/suggestions you would like to share? *(open text)*
9. Are you a local or visitor to the area? *(local / visitor)*

We had 318 online responses, and further 36 paper copies of the survey were also returned, and have been incorporated in the responses below.

From the 318 online responses, 95% felt that facilities were not adequate:

Do you feel that there is adequate provision of toilet / shower / campervan waste points in the area between Arisaig and Mallaig?

Answered: 317 Skipped: 1



We have included a full list of all the answers given to each question as an Appendix. This runs to 55 pages, but is quite an easy read as it's basically a list of answers to each question – and clearly shows where the pressures are. We have summarised the main points within this report.

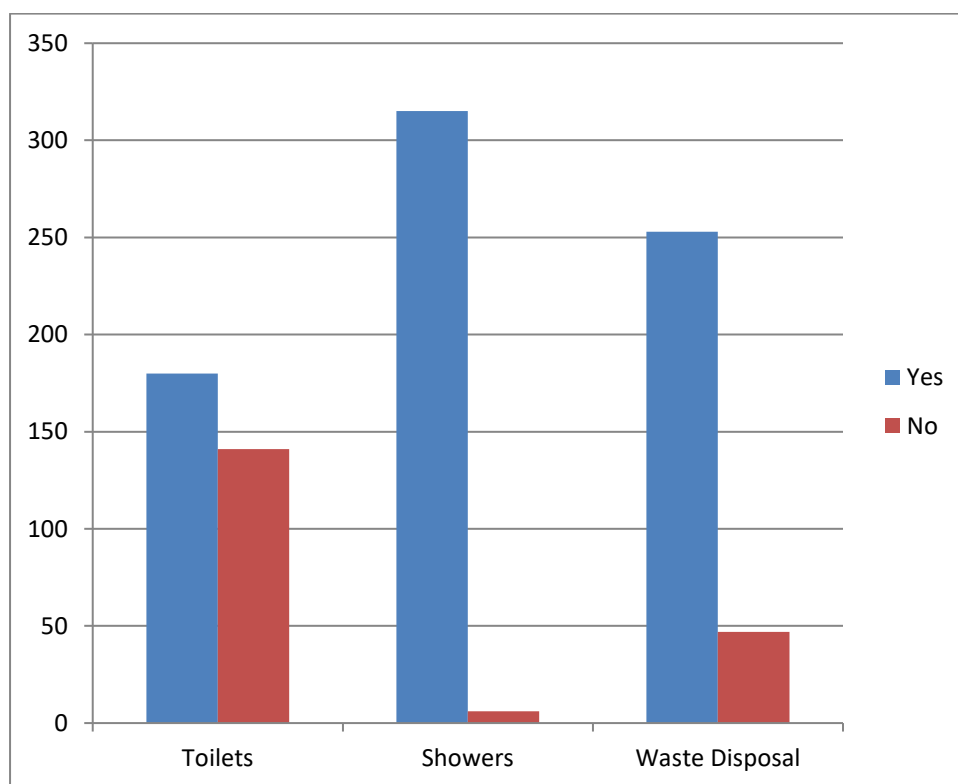
The answers given to question 2 cite a lack of facilities in general, and 'demand outstripping supply'. There is no one area singled out more than others, but recurring mention is made of inadequate toilet facilities, and no publicly available showers or chemical waste disposal facilities. The beaches are frequently mentioned, as are the main villages, and mention is made of toilet facilities not being available overnight. "There just seems to be a complete lack of these facilities. We drove through Arisaig to Morar a few months back and found nothing". Others commented on the toilets in Mallaig being too far away from the main village. Our proposal would make this more pronounced, so we may have to consider drop-off points for cars for people using the facilities. There is an indication that people are prepared to contribute towards facilities, "We stayed overnight by the harbour & although we could use the public toilet there was nothing else. There was a box for donations & we happily gave to keep them going."

Question 3 allowed people to comment on inconsiderate behaviour, and there were a number of instances described where people are spoiling the area due to a lack of facilities. "Regularly during the months of may - September you come accross human waste in local beaches and walkways which is infuriating as a dog owner you pick up dog poo, just awful to spoil such beauty spots!" "I personally have had tourists use outside my shed for the toilet on a number of occasions." Equally, a number of people had commented on the lack of facilities leaving them no alternative but to move on from the area. "No but have never been able to stay in the area due to lack of facilities. Sites always full. Shame beautiful area."

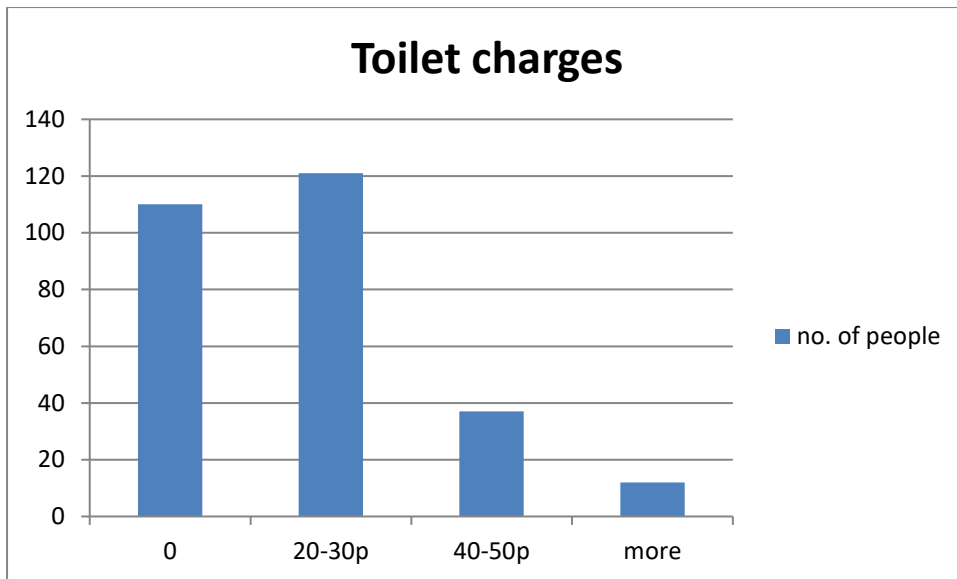
Question 4 brought out the issue of lack of parking in the area, and also the fact that the Steam Train influx, while welcome, means that locals and some visitors avoid the village of Mallaig at that time. A number of people indicated that they will not visit the beaches at peak times due to lack of parking around the beaches and vehicles being left unsafely on the coastal road. A number of respondents also indicated that the visit the area outwith peak times so it will be important to recognise this in any provision of facilities.

Question 5 reinforced the parking issues, mainly in Mallaig itself, but also in Arisaig village and along the coast road in general. There were several suggestions of developing a French style 'Aire', or of considering implementing parking/camping facilities such as those the West Harris Trust has done. These are opportunities that could perhaps be considered longer term, or suggested to local landowners to consider as a business opportunity. There were some suggestions of 'Park and Ride' facilities, as it was recognised that land, and therefore space for parking, was tight, especially in Mallaig. More bins, and more public toilets were also requested, and issues were raised about bins not being emptied frequently enough.

Question 6 asked if people felt it was appropriate to charge for providing facilities, and the graph below summarises the answers. In each case a majority felt charging was appropriate. Surprisingly, while almost all people felt it appropriate to charge for showers, there were a number who didn't think people should be charged to empty chemical waste.

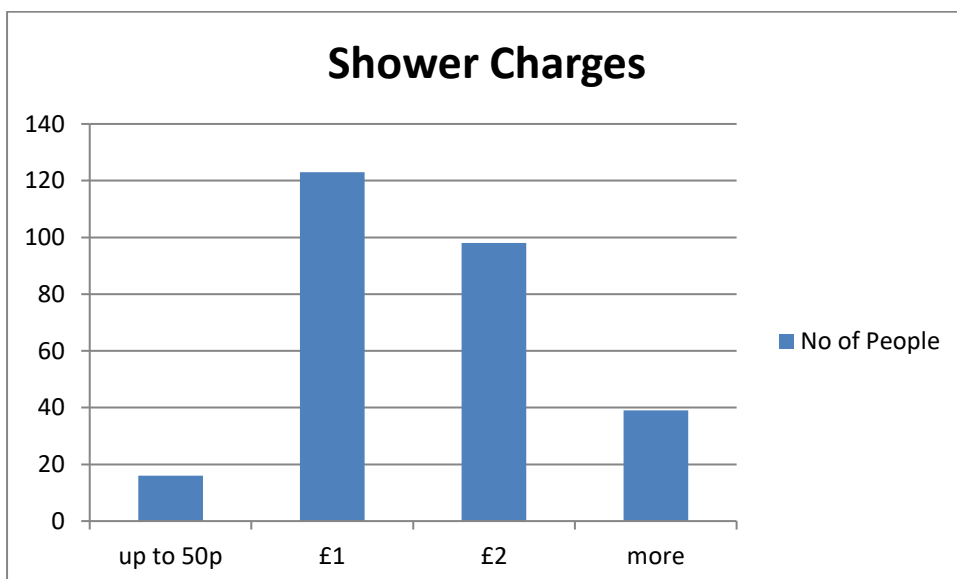


We then asked people what they felt an appropriate charge might be.



By far the largest majority of those who agreed with a charge felt that 20p was reasonable for toilets.

For showers, most people agreed with a charge, and while a small number felt that this should be up to 50p, the majority felt that £1 or £2 was appropriate. Of those who responded, a number had given a price per minute, while others had made suggestions for e.g. 5 minutes. Taking this into account, we think it would not be inappropriate to charge £2 for a shower lasting e.g. 5 minutes.



Less people were confident in suggesting a cost to empty chemical waste – probably reflecting less experience in using such facilities, but again suggested costs ranged from free to £5, with one respondent suggesting £5 unless overnight parking was also available, in which case £10. At the moment, we will not be in a position to provide overnight parking so £5 seems reasonable.

When we asked people what else could be done to improve the area, the overwhelming answer was again about providing more car parking, and better managing the existing car parking. Again, there were several mentions of providing 'Aire' facilities, and of providing more dedicating camper van spaces to alleviate the roadside parking which currently causes problems. Mention was also made of

lack of litter bins, an issue which has been raised with Highland Council. There was also mention of a need for better signage. People recognised that the area was suffering from Council cutbacks in terms of e.g. grass cutting and litter collection. There was also support for more facilities such as those we hope to provide.

We asked people if they had any final comments in Question 8, and one response summed it up, "It's important to welcome visitors into the area, but equally important to have the infrastructure to support those visits. Parking, toilets and waste disposal are paramount and need to be dealt with urgently otherwise both residents and tourists are unhappy."

There was support for new facilities, and support for the effort people are making to try and make these happen. People were grateful that they had been asked for their opinion, and again, parking was an issue. It was clear that the majority of those travelling in motorhomes try to act responsibly, and that the provision of some additional facilities in the area could make life better for visitors and locals alike.

We finally asked people whether they were local to the area, or a visitor, to try and ensure that the survey was representative.

Are you a local or a visitor to the area?

Answered: 304 Skipped: 14

